

Press release: African leaders gather in London for illegal wildlife talks

The Duke of Cambridge, the Foreign Secretary and leaders of African Commonwealth countries met on Friday 20 April for high level talks on tackling the illegal wildlife trade in advance of the next international conference in London later this year.

Ambitious proposals to tackle the crime were discussed and debated, including opportunities to boost cross-border law enforcement so that more elephants and other animals can move more freely and safely in Africa.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Many African countries are already working together and taking robust action to protect and preserve their precious wildlife but this is a serious problem driven by international criminal syndicates.

It is only through ambitious African-led initiatives that we will stop this deplorable crime for good, and we are ready to help. Here in the UK we are taking forward our own plans for a ban on domestic ivory sales, and in October I will co-host an international conference in London on combating the illegal wildlife trade.

Together we can stop the decline of the world's most iconic species and ensure that future generations don't have to live in a world without wildlife.

During the talks, the Foreign Secretary appealed for ambitious outcomes at October's conference, which will focus on tackling the illegal wildlife trade as a serious organised crime, building coalitions and closing illegal wildlife markets. The Foreign Secretary and African leaders discussed opportunities for increasing national and cross-border law enforcement programmes to catch poachers and stop wildlife traffickers.

The numbers are horrific: around 20,000 African elephants are killed by poachers each year. Savanna elephant numbers have declined by a third from 2007 to 2014 and there has been a 9,000% increase in rhino poaching in South Africa. Wildlife in many parts of Africa is at crisis levels.

Mafias and organised crime gangs are at the centre of much of the illegal wildlife trade, driving animals to the point of extinction and decimating wildlife tourism in communities that rely on it.

The illegal wildlife trade is a serious organised crime with revenues worth up to £17bn a year, more than the combined income of the Central African Republic, Liberia and Burundi. That is why the UK is taking forward plans for

a ban on domestic ivory sales and in October will host an international conference in London on combating the illegal wildlife trade.

Notes to editors:

- Representatives from the following countries attended the meeting: Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa, Cameroon & Nigeria.

Further information

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[News story: Europe's largest military exercise gets under way in UK](#)

More than 11,600 military personnel from 17 nations will take part in Exercise Joint Warrior for two weeks this spring in one of the largest exercises of its kind in Europe, operating out of Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Clyde, Scotland.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Joint Warrior prepares our troops in the best way to meet the intensifying threats our country faces by providing a major opportunity to exercise with our allies.

Our Armed Forces are the face of global Britain, and training side by side with troops from 16 other nations means we are stronger and more capable when it comes to keeping our countries safe and protecting our way of life.

The bi-annual exercise is running from the 21st April to 4th May, and incorporates all three UK services as well as forces from 16 other nations including Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the US.

Linked to the NATO exercise programme and open to Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) Partner Nations, Joint Warrior also hosts non-NATO partners such as Australia, Finland and Sweden. This year the training scenarios involve multiple sovereign nations disputing resources and territories; counter-terrorism and anti-smuggling activity; information warfare; and evacuation operations.

The exercise will provide NATO allies and partner nations the opportunity to train together across air, land, sea and cyber domains, practicing “high-end” war-fighting between near-peer adversaries.

Captain Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff, Captain Paul Pitcher RN, said:

This exercise gives the UK participants a chance to train with our allies and partners, honing our skills and developing our tactics. It is hugely important in making sure that we can fuse all elements of our capabilities, enhancing our ability to conduct joint operations now and in the future.

It will culminate on Salisbury Plain Training Area on the 3rd May in which JEF forces, including troops from the UK Parachute Regiment, the Danish Jutland Dragoon Regiment, the Lithuanian “Iron Wolf” Brigade and the Latvian Mechanised Infantry Brigade, will conduct urban combat operations with air support provided by Apaches, Chinooks, Wildcats and Tornados.

[News story: UK to establish global nursing partnership with Jamaica](#)

The partnership is an extension of the successful ‘earn, learn and return’ scheme, which has already seen Indian nurses benefit from NHS work experience.

Registered nurses from Jamaica will undertake work placements in the UK, facilitated by Health Education England, in areas such as emergency medicine and intensive care. They will go back to Jamaica to share their new skills, knowledge and experience with their own healthcare system.

In return, NHS staff will be given the opportunity to travel to Jamaica to

share their expertise with the Jamaican health service and help them to improve their care.

The aim of the scheme is to support the Jamaican government in improving the capability and capacity of their nursing workforce, as well as establish a network of professionals from both countries who will continue to share learning and knowledge beyond the scheme itself.

Minister of State for Health Stephen Barclay said:

The NHS is blazing a trail in healthcare across the world and it is testament to the skills and expertise of our dedicated nurses that other countries are vying for their knowledge to help improve their own services.

I'm delighted that we're partnering with Jamaica in this scheme, which will build on our existing collaboration with India, and further demonstrates the Government's commitment to forging new international relationships in preparation for the UK to leave the European Union.

This will also form part of the NHS's commitment to supporting its staff to develop and progress their careers. Offering global health placements within training programmes or as part of continual professional development has shown to have a positive impact on recruitment and retention of staff.

All nurses who come to work for the NHS will be required to meet the standards of the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

The UK government also recently announced a 25% increase in UK nursing degree training places.

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Eurostat: Indicateurs Europe 2020 relatifs à l'emploi – Le taux d'emploi des 20-64 ans dans l'UE atteint un nouveau pic de 72,2% en 2017, neuf États membres ont déjà atteint leur objectif de 2020

En 2017, le taux d'emploi de la population âgée de 20 à 64 ans dans l'Union européenne (UE) s'est établi à 72,2%, en hausse par rapport à 2016 (71,1%). L'objectif de la stratégie Europe 2020 est d'atteindre un taux d'emploi total des 20-64 ans d'au moins 75% dans l'UE d'ici à 2020. Cet objectif a été traduit en objectifs nationaux pour refléter la situation et les possibilités de chaque État membre de contribuer à l'objectif commun. L'évolution à la hausse est observée tant pour les hommes que pour les femmes. Le taux d'emploi des hommes s'est élevé à 78,0% en 2017, en hausse par rapport à 2016

(76,9%) et à un niveau quasi identique à celui de 2008 (77,9%), année du précédent pic. S'agissant des femmes, leur taux d'emploi a constamment augmenté depuis 2010 pour culminer à 66,5% en 2017 (comparé à 65,3% en 2016). De même, le taux d'emploi des 55-64 ans dans l'UE n'a cessé de croître, passant de 38,4% en 2002 à 57,1% en 2017. Une plus grande participation des travailleurs âgés est aussi l'un des objectifs de la stratégie Europe 2020 en matière d'emploi. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62293; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

Trade Defence: Commission extends anti-dumping duties on steel ropes and cables from China for another five years

Following a review the Commission today decided to continue imposing anti-dumping duties on imports of Chinese steel ropes and cables. Anti-dumping duties of 60.4% have been in place since 1999 and this is the third expiry review, extending measures at the same level for a further 5 years. As a result of a previous anti-circumvention investigation, products consigned from Morocco and the Republic of Korea are also subject to these duties. The expiry review investigation found evidence that dumping from Chinese companies would continue should measures be allowed to lapse, which would have a negative financial impact on the EU steel industry. Steel ropes and cables have a wide variety of uses, including in the fishing, maritime, mining, forestry and constructions sector. The EU market is estimated to be worth around €500 million and the EU industry is present in at least 14 Member States, including Germany, Italy, Poland and the UK. The steel sector is a vital industry for the European Union's economy and occupies a central position in global value chains, providing jobs for hundreds of thousands of European citizens. The global surplus in steelmaking capacity has driven down steel prices to unsustainable levels in recent years and had a damaging impact on the steel sector, as well as related industries and jobs. The EU is using therefore the full potential of its trade defence toolbox to ensure a level-playing-field for its producers and their ability to maintain jobs in the sector. 53 measures are now in place on steel and iron products, including 27 on products coming from China. The regulation can be found [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

Safer and cleaner cars: Commission welcomes European Parliament green light to tightening rules

Following the [political agreement](#) reached in December 2017, yesterday the European Parliament formally voted in favour of the Commission's proposal for a fully overhauled type-approval framework. Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, welcomed the vote: "One important complaint we heard on Dieselgate was that the EU failed to act. In reality our margin of manoeuvre was limited. We now agreed on a fundamental reform that gives the Commission the power to make sure manufacturers will no longer get away with cheating. The new rules will give us cleaner cars on our way to zero emission and safer cars for the roll-out of autonomous driving." The new framework will raise the quality level and independence of vehicle type-approval and testing, increase checks of

cars that are already on the EU market and strengthen the overall system with European oversight. After formal adoption in Council in the coming weeks and publication in the [Official Journal](#), the Regulation will become mandatory as of [1 September 2020](#) for all new vehicle models. The new rules go hand in hand with other Commission initiatives such as the proposal for a [new deal for consumers](#), which in a Dieselgate-type scenario will allow victims of unfair commercial practices to obtain remedies collectively through a representative action. In its efforts to bring down emissions from vehicles the Commission has introduced [new and improved car emissions tests](#) which became mandatory in September 2017. The Commission recently held a [public consultation on its proposal](#) to further improve these tests. This proposal will be voted on in the Technical Committee on Motor Vehicles (TCMV) in the coming weeks. *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)*

State aid: Commission approves €56 million public support scheme to promote shift of freight from road to rail in Sweden

The European Commission has found a Swedish public support scheme to encourage a shift of freight transport from road to rail to be in line with EU State aid rules. The measure will promote EU environmental and transport objectives, whilst maintaining competition in the Single Market. In Sweden, around 40% of freight is transported by road, 40% by water and just over 20% by rail. The new scheme has an overall budget of SEK 563 million (approximately €56 million) and will run until 2019, and aims to increase the share of rail transport. The aid takes the form of a subsidy to railway companies that carry freight, with the objective of channelling part of the advantage to end customers, incentivising them to switch to rail transport. The Commission found that the scheme is beneficial for the environment and mobility, supporting rail transport, which is less polluting than road transport, while also decreasing road congestion. The Commission concluded that the measure is compatible with EU State aid rules, in particular the [2008 Commission Guidelines on State aid for railway undertakings](#). More information will be available on the Commission's [competition website](#) in the public [case register](#) under the case number SA.49749. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete in Egypt for new strategic partnership on energy

Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** will be in Egypt on 22-24 April for a high-level visit with government officials and energy stakeholders. He will meet the President of the Egyptian Republic, His Excellency Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, and members of the Egyptian Government, namely the Prime Minister, the Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy and the Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources. On behalf of the Commission he will sign a Memorandum of Understanding for Strategic Cooperation in Energy

between the EU and Egypt. The Commissioner will also meet with European energy companies and open the EU-Egypt Sustainable Energy Business Forum & Exhibition. Furthermore, an on-site visit to the Zohr onshore gas facility in Port Said is foreseen. The visit is a key element of the external dimension of the Energy Union, a political priority of the Juncker Commission. Ahead of his visit, Commissioner **Arias Cañete** said: *“The EU and Egypt are strategic partners on energy. The potential for an even closer energy cooperation between the EU and Egypt is enormous, and I hope this visit will herald a new phase of closer and more intense relations amongst us. Egypt can lead the way of the clean energy transition in the Eastern Mediterranean and thus contribute to the Paris climate goals and the worldwide decarbonisation effort. Likewise, Egypt is becoming an upcoming important gas and electricity hub that can provide energy security for the EU and for the entire region. There is much to gain in terms of access to new sources of energy and market opportunities, for European and Egyptian citizens and businesses alike. The EU stands ready to support Egypt in its energy market reforms and to boost sustainable energy investment.”* More information on the website of the [Commission’s website](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

Hannover industrial show: Commission debates EU Industrial Strategy

On 22-23 April, Commission Vice-President Maroš **Šefčovič** and Commissioners Günther H. **Oettinger** and Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** participate in the [Hannover Messe 2018](#), one of the world’s largest trade fairs. In 2016, the Commission presented the [EU’s Strategy for low-emission mobility](#) and in 2017 the renewed [Industrial Policy Strategy](#) – both advocating a Europe that embraces technological change and continues pioneering on smart, innovative and sustainable industry. The Commissioners will take the opportunity to engage with the most daring and forward-looking businesses – be it in the field of automation, batteries, digital innovation or software development. Vice-President **Šefčovič** and Commissioner **Oettinger** will attend the official opening ceremony together with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto. Vice-President **Šefčovič** participates in a dialogue on the EU Battery Alliance and delivers a key note speech on the future of EU mobility. The speech will be followed by a panel discussion focused on automation and decarbonisation, which Commissioner **Bieńkowska** also joins. Both will meet Mr Stephan Weil, Prime Minister of Lower Saxony (Germany). Commissioner **Bieńkowska** will furthermore hold separate meetings with Ildefonso Guajardo Real, Minister of Economy of Mexico, and Dieter Kempf, President of the Federation of German Industries (BDI). Commissioner **Oettinger** will participate in a lunch discussion with representatives of industries on investing in industrial digitisation. He will also deliver keynote speeches at two events on digital transformation. Please consult [Commissioners’ calendar](#) for more details. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Dialogue citoyens au Portugal: le commissaire Moedas et le Premier ministre António Costa débattent avec des jeunes

Carlos **Moedas**, commissaire en charge de la recherche, de la science et de

l'innovation, participera cette après-midi à Cascais (Portugal) à un [dialogue citoyens](#) aux côtés du Premier ministre portugais António Costa. L'événement se tient dans le cadre d'une compétition autour de la simulation du fonctionnement du Parlement européen, organisée par la ville de Cascais, Capitale européenne de la jeunesse 2018. Ce débat, intitulé "Jeunesse et Futur de l'Europe", est le premier d'une série d'événements au Portugal dans la lignée des consultations citoyennes initiées par le Président Macron dans toute l'Union européenne. Plus de 200 jeunes, dont de nombreux étudiants étrangers, sont attendus à Cascais aujourd'hui. (Pour plus d'informations: *Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tél. +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040*)

Emploi: La Commissaire Thyssen inaugure la Cité des Métiers à Bruxelles

Lundi 23 avril, la Commissaire en charge de l'Emploi, des Affaires sociales, des Compétences et de la Mobilité des Travailleurs, Marianne **Thyssen** assistera à la cérémonie d'inauguration de la [Cité des Métiers à Bruxelles](#), en présence du Ministre-Président bruxellois Rudi Vervoort et du Ministre de l'Économie, de l'Emploi, de la Formation Professionnelle, de la Santé, du Budget et de la Fonction publique de Bruxelles, Didier Gosuin. A l'occasion de l'inauguration, la Commissaire **Thyssen** a dit: "65% des enfants qui vont à l'école primaire aujourd'hui, travailleront dans des professions qui n'existent pas encore. Les gens changent jusqu'à 10 fois de travail au long de leurs carrières. Il est donc clair que les travailleurs d'aujourd'hui et demain devront se former tout au long de leur vie. C'est exactement ça la valeur ajoutée de la Cité des Métiers: elle nous montre comment l'on peut se développer dans ce nouveau monde du travail. Ensemble avec les initiatives européennes, je pense que la Cité des Métiers est un excellent moyen pour garantir un avenir professionnel réussi à nos citoyens." La Cité des Métiers est un espace interactif de 1100 mètres carrés en plein cœur de la capitale belge, entièrement dédié à l'orientation et au conseil, et rassemble pour la première fois tous les acteurs bruxellois de l'emploi, de la formation et de l'enseignement. C'est un lieu d'exposition, offrant des informations sur les professions, les compétences nécessaires et les formations disponibles dans le nouveau monde de travail. La cérémonie d'ouverture aura lieu à partir de 14h et est ouverte à la presse. Journalistes intéressés sont invités à nous contacter pour s'enregistrer. (Pour plus d'informations: *Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094*)

Culture: Commissioner Navracsics attends international cultural heritage forum in Brussels

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics** will participate in the '[Forum on the International Perspectives of the European Year of Cultural Heritage](#)' in Brussels on Monday, 23 April. The event will highlight the international aspect of cultural relations and start a wider discussion on how culture – in the framework of the European Year and beyond – can improve relations between countries and communities. Commissioner **Navracsics** said: "Diplomacy is often led by politicians. Cultural diplomacy is different. It empowers citizens and civil society to recognise the

intertwined nature of our societies, history and culture in the hope they can build a better tomorrow. The European Year of Cultural Heritage is a true embodiment of that aspiration and the perfect catalyst to promote the EU's international strategy." Organised by the [Cultural Diplomacy Platform](#), the Forum is a concrete outcome of the [EU strategy](#) for international cultural relations launched by Commissioner Navracsics and EU High Representative and Vice-President Federica Mogherini in June 2016. Central to that strategy is the acknowledgement of culture as a resource that helps drive economic growth and strengthen international partnerships. A [Spotlight brochure](#) on the [European Year of Cultural Heritage](#) is available online. The closing remarks will be covered by [EbS](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel. [+32 229 56184](#))

Citizens' Dialogue in Ireland: Commissioner Hogan discusses the future of food and farming

Commissioner for Agriculture Phil **Hogan** will today participate in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on the future of food and farming in Kilkenny, Ireland. Entitled "Making CAP 2020 work for you", the dialogue will focus on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its implications for Irish farmers. Commissioner **Hogan** will be joined on stage by Mr. Joe Healy, President of the Irish Farmers' Association. Commissioner Hogan presented on 29 November [the orientations](#) proposed by the European Commission on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. This Citizens' Dialogue is part of a series of engagements between the Commission and key stakeholders in the agri-food sector that are ongoing throughout the Union since the adoption of the Commission's Communication. Citizens' Dialogues are a regular feature of the daily work of the Juncker Commission. All Members of the Commission travel to regions and cities across Europe to engage in dialogue with citizens and listen to their views and expectations concerning the future of the Union. Since the beginning of the mandate, over 130 dialogues were held in more than 80 towns. Today's Dialogue with Commissioner **Hogan** will start at 19h and will be web-streamed [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56 185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

[Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' weekly activities

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

[Europe 2020 employment indicators- Employment rate of people aged 20 to](#)

64 in the EU reached a new peak at 72.2% in 2017-Nine Member States already achieved their 2020 targets

In 2017, the employment rate of people aged 20 to 64 in the **European Union** (EU) stood at 72.2%, up compared with 2016 (71.1%). The Europe 2020 strategy target is to reach a total employment rate for people aged 20 to 64 of at least 75% in the **EU** by 2020. This objective has been translated into different national targets in order to reflect the situation and possibilities of each Member State to contribute to the common goal.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)